

Licensing Requirements for Wisconsin School Social Workers

For more information from the School
Social Work Practice Guide visit:
http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_sswguide

In order to work in Wisconsin public schools as a school social worker, it is necessary for the individual to be licensed as a school social worker by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Licensure requires a master's degree in social work and a statement from a DPI-approved school social work preparation program that the candidate has met all necessary requirements as delineated in PI 34.

PI 34.31 Pupil services categories. Licenses may be issued in the following pupil services categories at the early childhood through adolescence level to individuals who complete an approved program, demonstrate proficiency in the standards in PI 34.04 and meet the additional requirements under this subchapter. Specific competencies for the separate license categories shall be determined by the state superintendent based on the recommendations made by the professional standards council under s. 115.425, Stats.

(4) School social worker. (a) A license may be issued to an applicant who has obtained an institutional endorsement and has completed or possesses all of the following:

1. A master's degree in social work.
2. Institutional endorsement.

Candidates from other states are eligible to receive an initial license (allowing them time to complete any Wisconsin-specific requirements they may still need), if they have a master's degree in social work and school social work licensure or certification from another state. Candidates for any of the four pupil services professions (school counseling, nursing, psychology, and social work) must demonstrate the adequate knowledge, skills, and dispositions under the seven pupil services standards.

PI 34.04 Pupil services standards. To receive a license in a pupil services category under s. PI 34.31, an applicant shall complete an approved program and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards:

- (1) The pupil services professional understands the teacher standards under s. PI 34.02.
- (2) The pupil services professional understands the complexities of learning and knowledge of comprehensive, coordinated practice strategies that support pupil learning, health, safety and development.
- (3) The pupil services professional has the ability to use research, research methods and knowledge about issues and trends to improve practice in schools and classrooms.
- (4) The pupil services professional understands and represents professional ethics and social behaviors appropriate for school and community.
- (5) The pupil services professional understands the organization, development, management and content of collaborative and mutually supportive pupil services programs within educational settings.
- (6) The pupil services professional is able to address comprehensively the wide range of social, emotional, behavioral and physical issues and circumstances which may limit pupils' abilities to achieve positive learning outcomes through development, implementation and evaluation of system-wide interventions and strategies.

(7) The pupil services professional interacts successfully with pupils, parents, professional educators, employers, and community support systems such as juvenile justice, public health, human services and adult education.

Each educator profession, including school social work, has established program licensure guidelines that further delineate knowledge, skills, and dispositions that must be demonstrated in order to be certified to work in Wisconsin public schools.

The School Social Worker will demonstrate knowledge of and skill in:

1. Social welfare and educational policy, including:
 - History of education, social work and human services systems
 - Role of policy at local, state and national levels in education and school social work practice
 - Process of policy formation and implementation and its impact on student and family systems, schools, organizations and communities
 - Use of policy practice to analyze, influence and advocate
 - State and federal laws related to school social work practice, such as education, child welfare, mental health and juvenile justice
2. Social work values and ethics, including:
 - Mission of public education
 - Mission of school social work to insure student learning, educational equity and social justice for every student by reducing or eliminating the social, economic, and environmental barriers
 - Demonstration and promotion of the values of the profession as delineated in the NASW Code of Ethics
 - Professional school social work and pupil services standards
 - Ability to use an ethical decision-making model to guide practice
 - Ability to practice as an autonomous social worker in keeping with the values and ethics of the profession
3. Social and economic justice and populations at risk,* including:
 - Understanding risk/resiliency factors for populations at risk*
 - Understanding the dynamics of risk factors for school failure and the strategies to address them
 - Understanding how group membership and various forms of oppression affect access to resources and educational opportunities
 - Strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, institutional racism and economic deprivation
 - Advocacy for non-discriminatory social and economic systems
 - Identification of inequities in access to school and community programs and services for children, youth and families
4. Systematic assessment of individuals, families, schools, and community and their interactions, including:
 - Students' physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and family history
 - Students' learning, behavior and attitudes in different settings, including formal assessment of adaptive skills, functional behavior, and responses to interventions
 - Patterns of achievement and adjustment at critical points in students' growth and development
 - Comprehensive assessment of students suspected of having disabilities related to IEPs and 504 plans
 - Assessment and screening for barriers to learning such as substance abuse, mental illness and trauma
 - Formal and informal policies of the school and other institutional factors that may affect students' behavior and learning
 - Existence, accessibility, and utilization of community resources for students and families
5. Effective prevention and intervention with individuals, families, schools and communities, including:
 - Utilization of a strength-based approach to enhance students' capacities, with special emphasis on students in populations at risk*

- Design and implementation of practice strategies with persons from diverse backgrounds
 - Partnership with families and others to resolve challenges in the home, school and community
 - Counseling
 - Crisis intervention and other mental health services
 - Casework and case management
 - Group work
 - Classroom instruction
 - Consultation
 - Mediation and conflict resolution
 - Advocacy
 - Development of positive behavioral intervention strategies
 - Development of written plans of service for students, such as IEPs, BIPs, and 504 plans
 - Coordination of student transitions to/from community-based services and schools
 - Curriculum development
 - Program development and management
 - Provision of professional development and community education
 - Collaboration as leaders or members of interdisciplinary teams and community partnerships
 - Community organization, including mobilization of school and community resources
6. Human behavior and social environment, including:
- Biological, psychological, and sociological variables affecting development, learning and educational achievement
 - Application of theoretical frameworks to understand the interaction among individuals and between individuals and social systems (families, groups, organizations and communities)
7. Diversity, including:
- Cultural factors in race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class and how culture affects individual, family, group, organizational and community behavior
 - Understanding of and affirmation and respect for people from diverse backgrounds and recognition of diversity within and between groups
 - Development of trust, open communication, mutual respect and on-going collaboration with members of diverse populations
 - Ability to take cultural and other diversity factors into account in assessments and interventions
8. Research, including:
- Qualitative and quantitative methodologies
 - Use of practice literature and empirically-based knowledge in the areas of children, youth, families and schools to:
 - provide high-quality school social work services and educational interventions
 - evaluate programs and services
 - evaluate one's own practice
 - initiate change, and
 - improve practice, policy, and programs

**Populations at risk include, but are not limited to, children with disabilities, school age parents, homeless youth and families, students affected by mental health and AOD issues, GLBTQ students, abused and neglected students, students living in poverty, children of color, adjudicated and incarcerated youth, gifted and talented students, English-language learners, students whose families are in crisis, and other marginalized groups of students.*

School social worker preparation programs must include a practicum.

PI 34.15 Conceptual framework. Each SCD shall have a written conceptual framework included as part of the requirements under s. PI 34.06 (1). The conceptual framework shall be well defined, articulated, and defensible and shall include all of the following:

(5) A clinical program including practicums for pupil services and administrative programs and for prestudent teaching, student teaching, and other supervised clinical experiences in prekindergarten through grade 12 school settings as follows:

(c) *Practicum program.*

1. Programs for pupil services and administrative licenses shall include supervised practicums in the area of licensure that are developmental in scope and sequence.
2. As a result of the practicum experience a license candidate shall demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Wisconsin standards in PI 34.02, PI 34.03 or PI 34.04.
3. Successful performance shall be measured using all of the following:
 - a. At least 2 written evaluations based upon observations by the school-based supervisor and at least 2 written evaluations by the SCD supervisor shall be required during each student's practicum.
 - b. The evaluation procedures under subpar. a. shall include at least 2 conferences involving the school-based supervisor, the SCD supervisor and the practicum student. The school-based supervisor evaluation of the practicum shall become part of the student's portfolio.

There are some general requirements that all candidates for Wisconsin educator certification must meet.

PI 34.15 Conceptual framework. Each SCD shall have a written conceptual framework included as part of the requirements under s. PI 34.06 (1). The conceptual framework shall be well defined, articulated, and defensible and shall include all of the following:

(4) Provisions that meet the following requirements, including those that meet statutory requirements identified under s. 118.19, Stats., which enable all students completing teacher preparation programs to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following:

(c) Minority group relations for all licenses including all of the following:

1. The history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of American Indian tribes and bands located in Wisconsin.
2. The history, culture and contributions of women and various racial, cultural, language and economic groups in the United States.
3. The philosophical and psychological bases of attitude development and change.
4. The psychological and social implications of discrimination, especially racism and sexism in the American society.
5. Evaluating and assessing the forces of discrimination, especially racism and sexism on faculty, students, curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the school program.
6. Minority group relations through direct involvement with various racial, cultural, language and economic groups in the United States.

(d) Conflict resolution for all licenses including all of the following:

1. Resolving conflicts between pupils and between pupils and school staff.
2. Assisting pupils in learning methods of resolving conflicts between pupils and between pupils and school staff, including training in the use of peer mediation to resolve conflicts between pupils.
3. Dealing with crises, including violent, disruptive, potentially violent or potentially disruptive situations that may arise in school or activities supervised by school staff as a result of conflicts between pupils or between pupils and other persons.

(g) Procedures used for assessing and providing education for children with disabilities, including the roles and responsibilities of regular and special education providers.

(h) Modifying the regular education curriculum when instructing pupils with disabilities.

Additional information on licensing is available at <http://tepdل.dpi.wi.gov>.

School social workers may apply for Master Educator Licensure, a 10-year license that demonstrates a high level of proficiency. More information is available at <http://tepdل.dpi.wi.gov/licensing/master-educator-license>.